



**What kind
of fish can
you catch
in the
river and
lake?**

You can catch a variety of fish from the Kootenai River or Lake Koocanusa. Sportfish include rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, brook trout, kokanee salmon (blueback), ling (burbot), mountain whitefish, and Kamloops (a strain of rainbow trout). Fishing limits for each species are listed in the current Montana fishing regulations pamphlet. A valid Montana fishing license is required to fish in Montana waters.

Come try your LUCK!



**Who owns
and operates
Murray
Springs Fish
Hatchery?**



The Hatchery is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is operated by the [Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks](#). Murray Springs Fish Hatchery was built in 1978 by the Corps of Engineers to mitigate for fishery losses in the Kootenai River caused by construction of Libby Dam. The Corps pays for the operation and maintenance of the fish hatchery. Fish raised at the hatchery are planted into many of the lakes and streams in Lincoln County as well as in Lake Koocanusa.

Does Libby Dam have fish ladders?

Libby Dam does not have fish ladders. At the time of construction there was not a concern about resident fish passing back and forth between the river and the reservoir. Biologists were only concerned with passage of anadromous (sea-going) fish, and since there arent any in the Kootenai River, fish ladders were not installed. Fish ladders are never found on large storage reservoirs such as Lake Koocanusa due to the difficulties associated with keeping the upstream end of the ladder in contact with the water as the reservoir is filled and drafted, a fluctuation in water elevation of up to 120 feet during certain years. There are now kokanee salmon in Lake Koocanusa and in the Kootenai River below the dam where they spawn in tributaries at the northern end of the reservoir in both Canada and the United States. Kokanee are not native to the Kootenai system above Kootenai Falls, though they are native below the falls. They were introduced into the upper Kootenai system in the late 1970's through accidental releases by a Canadian hatchery in Wardner, British Columbia. Kokanee do not make spawning migrations to sea the way other salmon species do, they are a land locked form of sockeye salmon (which are anadromous). They hatch out in streams and migrate to larger water bodies such as Lake

Koocanusa, and then as 3 year old adults migrate back up these streams to spawn, after which they die, just like anadromous salmon.

What About Wildlife

The Corps of Engineers purchased 2,400 acres of land to help replace the winter range flooded by Lake Koocanusa. These lands, located near Eureka and Libby, were deeded over to the state of Montana in 1982. Today, the natural resource section at Libby Dam is active in bald eagle management and the [watchable wildlife](#) program as well as stewardship of approximately 2000 acres of Corps-owned land.

Artificial Nests For Bald Eagles: A Case Study

Although the use of artificial nests for bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is rare, they have been well-received by most breeding pairs. Artificial nests may be used to replace natural nests that have been destroyed, to encourage the breeding pair to move their nest away from excessive human activity, and to encourage the use of new breeding areas or the reoccupation of old, unused territories, thus promoting an expansion of the population (Stalmaster 168). In 1995, an unusual summer snow storm hit the Jennings bald eagle nest territory (007-067-002) of Northwestern Montana and forced a natural nest and two eaglets out of the tree. This situation provided the opportunity for the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and [US Forest Service](#) (USFS) employees to experiment with the use of an artificial nest to replace a destroyed natural nest. Although there were notable side-effects of the artificial nest, the construction was generally well-received by both the adults and the young. The success of the project provided valuable information about nest construction, eagle adaptation, and the effects of human interaction on eagle activity.

Watchable Wildlife

watchable wildlife at Libby Dam can be very rewarding for those that like to get out and see nature. For those that can't get out or don't have the time, we have a new addition that allows them to get a birds eye view of bald eagles nesting. Visit the [Libby Dam Eagle Cam Main Page](#) for more information.

The breeding seasons starts in late winter and early spring. Bald Eagles can be seen tending their nest in early March to late June by viewing Libby Dam's new [Eagle Cam](#).

Late fall and early winter Bald Eagle viewing is at it's best. Bald Eagle migration begins in the later part of October, peaks around late November (Thanksgiving) and tapers off in mid-February near the beginning of the breeding season.

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